

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY HER WORSHIP CLLR
TLOTLANANG MOGOTLANE THE EXECUTIVE MAYOR
OF WATERBERG DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY DURING THE
DISTRICT 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM ON NO VIOLENCE
AGAINST WOMEN, CHILDREN AND PEOPLE WITH
DISABILITIES HELD ON THE 8TH DECEMBER 2013 AT
REBONE COMMUNITY HALL AT 11H00 IN
MOGALAKWENA LOCAL MUNICIPALITY.**

Programme Director,

Mayor of Mogalakwena Local Municipality Cllr Mashamaite,

Mayors from the Local Municipalities in the District present,

Speakers and Chief Whips in the District,

Members of the Mayoral Committees present,

All Councillors in the District,

Magoshi a rena,,

Caregivers and Social Workers present,

Our NGOs and CBOs,

Officials from Sector Departments and municipalities,

Members of the South African Police Service,

Members of our Emergency Services,

The Media Houses present,

Community members,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Thobela!! Re a lotsha!!

We are gathered here today to advance the District 16 Days campaign and to declare war on all those who still abuse women, children and people with disabilities.

Programme Director, 16 Days of Activism for No Violence against Women and Children is a United Nations- endorsed campaign that takes place annually from the 25th November to the 10th December.

Government has been at the forefront of condemning incidents of violence against women and children and has urged all South Africans to respect the rights of women and children.

Ladies and gentlemen, the theme for 2013 is: **“VIKELA MZANSI-KWANELE! COMMUNITIES UNITED IN PREVENTING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN”**

Despite South Africa`s constitutional and legislative protection, violence based on gender and sexual orientation remain unacceptably high. The violence takes different forms such as:

- Sexual harassment;
- Abuse;
- Assault;
- Rape;
- So-called corrective rape where rape is used as a form of discipline;
- Domestic violence and
- Other cultural practices which are harmful to women, children and people with disabilities.

Programme Director, tragically, violence and abuse continue to plague our country. These horrific crimes happen mostly in the privacy of our homes and in families and communities. The time has come for all of us to take a long hard look at our collective values and behaviours as a society. We must all act to prevent abuse and ensure a safer society for women and children. However, despite overwhelming awareness, this has not translated into substantial drop in violence against women and children.

To combat this, the voices of men must be louder during this campaign; they must be mobilised and need to declare publicly that enough is enough. The voices of men are crucial in the fight against violence and abuse. Responsible father figures must instil the values of human dignity, equality and respect in young men and boys.

Government is working with partners such as Men`s forums, House of Traditional Leaders and religious leaders to ensure the safety of women and children. Schools can play an important role, learners should be engaged at an early age; parents too have to take an active role and speak to, and teach their children societal values. Only by working together as a society can we prevent the scourge of violence against women and children.

Ladies and gentlemen, we call on everyone to play their part and prevent violence against women, children and people with disabilities. No woman, man or child should be beaten, raped, stabbed, shot or attacked in any manner anywhere in our country.

Those who abuse, rape and murder have no place in our communities. By working together with the police, prosecutors and the courts, we can ensure that these criminals are arrested and convicted.

On behalf of the people of Waterberg, let me take this opportunity to applaud the police and the judiciary for sentencing the so-called Modimolle Monster, Johan Kotze to life in prison for the murder of his step-son Conrad Bonnete, the rape of his ex-wife Ina Bonnete and for kidnapping and assault. Together with his co-accused they have been given life sentences in July this year.

Programme Director, as we gear ourselves for celebrating 20 years of democracy in 2014, our ANC led government has done a lot to fulfil the commitment to end discrimination against women and to make sure they have equal role in government.

The ANC led government has a Plan, the National Development Plan 2030 which aims to do amongst others the following:

- Build a society where women live as full equals, with no fear of violence and all have opportunities to reach their potential;
- Improve women`s representation in company and government management through Employment Equity and supporting education and opportunities for women;
- Challenge and change sexist attitude and make it easier for women to report abuse by setting up sexual offences courts and support at police stations and;
- To prosecute and fine men who do not pay maintenance.

Ladies and gentlemen, families and communities have the primary duty to protect their children from harm. Creating a safe and secure environment for children is a shared responsibility of parents, caregivers, organisations and all sectors of the society.

Irresponsible parents or guardians who leave young children unattended and vulnerable to abuse, are as guilty of crime as those who commit the crime. The challenge is to thus unite against unbecoming social behaviours and practices, breaking the vicious cycle of violence.

The fight against alcohol and illegal substance abuse and trafficking must continue, as it is one of the key root causes of domestic violence, abuse, rape and killings. Government support parents in their role to provide and care for their children through its extensive social security programme such as care dependency grant, child support grant and foster care grant.

Programme Director, let us speak out against abuse. South Africa is held in high esteem by the rest of the world including laws in our constitution that prevent discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. Let us not allow the actions of a few undermine the gains we have all made as a nation since 1994.

Ladies and gentlemen, let me take this opportunity to wish you a Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year. Travel safe during the festive season and God bless all of you.

I THANK YOU.